



# Software Defined Radio Developments and Verification for Space Environment on NASA's Communication Navigation, and Networking Testbed (CoNNeCT)

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# SCAN Testbed

## Science & Technology Goals & Objectives

- **INVESTIGATE the APPLICATION of SDRS TO NASA MISSIONS**
  - Mission advantages and development/verification/operations aspects
  - On-Orbit Reconfiguration
  - More process intensive functions within the radio subsystem
- **SDR TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT**
  - SDR Platforms to TRL-7
  - SDR platform hardware & waveform compliant to STRS, Foster Agency adoption
  - Understand/characterize space effects and SDR performance
- **VALIDATE FUTURE MISSION OPERATIONAL CAPABILITIES**
  - Capability representative of future missions
    - Comm data rate, performance, navigation/ GPS, networking/routing
  - Understand SDR performance (reliability, SEE, telemetry, instrumentation)
  - Multiple and simultaneous RF Links (Ka-band, S-band, L-band/GPS)
  - Experimenter sw applications (On-board networking , DTN, routing, and security applications)

# Flight System Overview

- Communication System

- SDRs

- 2 S-band SDRs (1 with GPS)
    - 1 Ka-band SDR

- RF

- Ka-band TWTA
    - S-band switch network

- Antennas

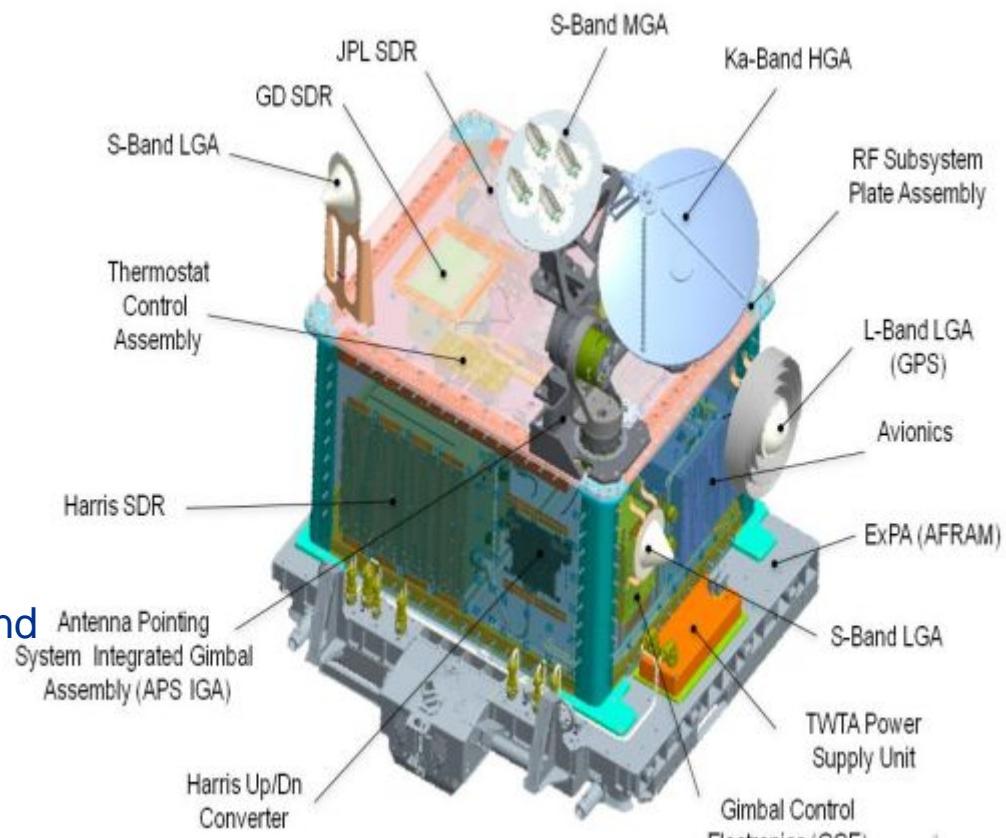
- 2 - low gain S-band antennas
    - 1 - L-band GPS antenna
    - Medium gain S-band and Ka-band antenna on antenna pointing subsystem.

- Antenna pointing system.

- Two gimbals
    - Control electronics

- Flight Computer/Avionics

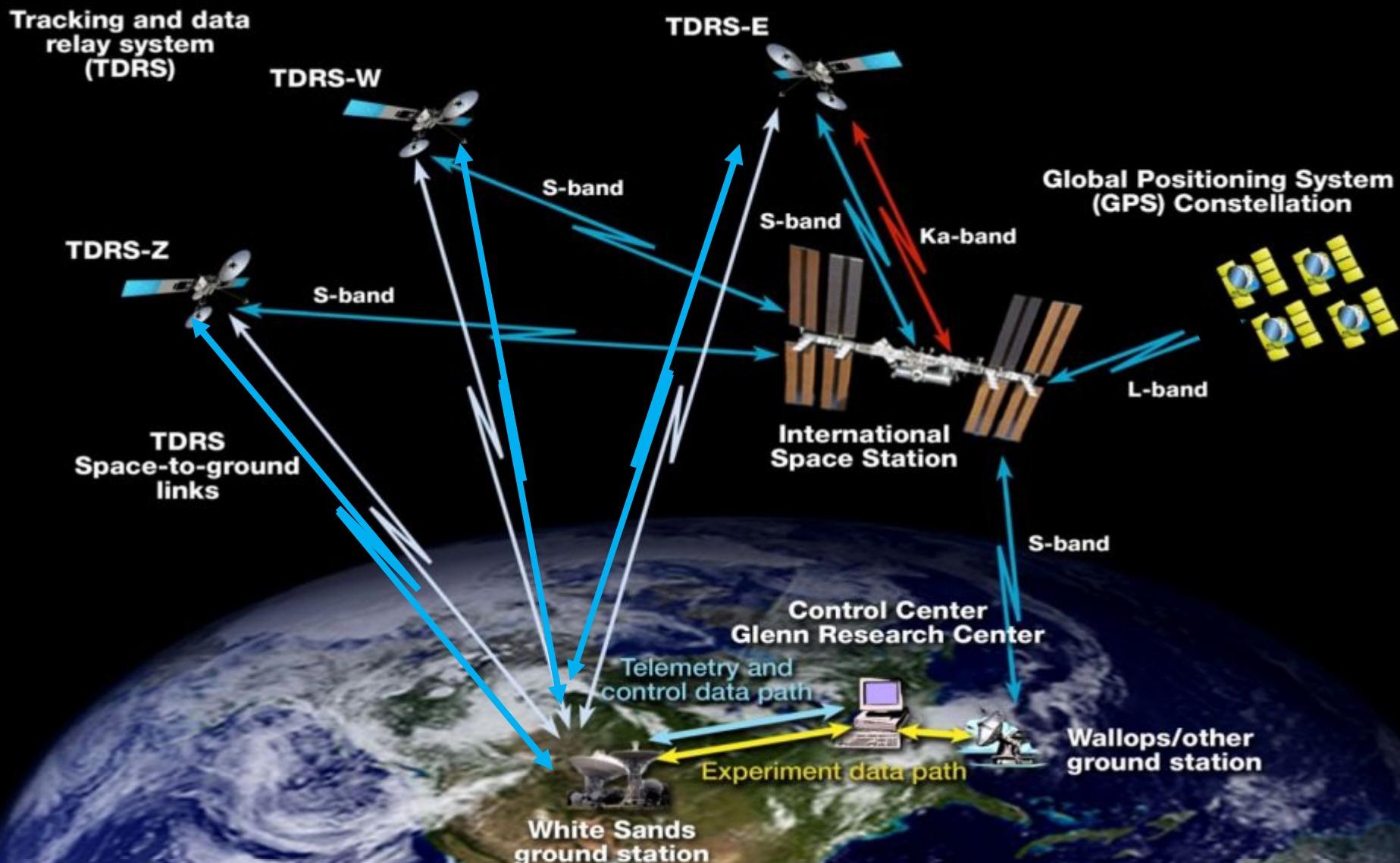
- Flight enclosure provides for thermal control/radiator surface.



Total mass ~746 lb



# SCAN Testbed System Architecture





# Radio Introduction

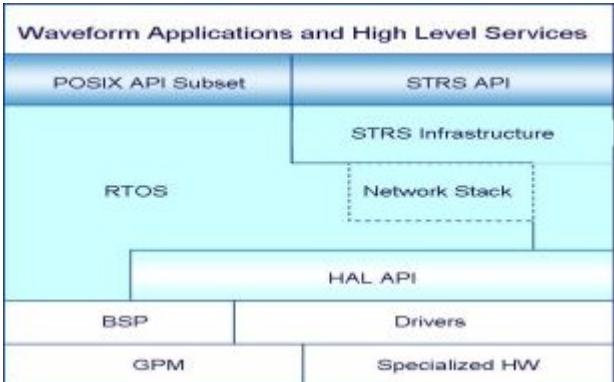
- Assess development cost and risk for space SDRs
  - Gain lessons learned for development, verifications, operations
  - Highlight routine on-orbit reconfigurability
- Infuse STRS into radio product lines
  - Assess development cost and risk for STRS compliance
  - Enable multiple providers of STRS radios
- Look to move more functions into the radio (e.g. framing traditionally done in flight computer)
- Leverage existing products to meet NASA needs
  - SDR (tech) developments used cooperative agreements to share cost/risk
- Capability driven by NASA needs, schedule, cost
  - Existing interfaces
  - S-band, Ka-band, GPS (L5)



# SDRs are the core of the CONNECT Communication System

## STRS SDRs

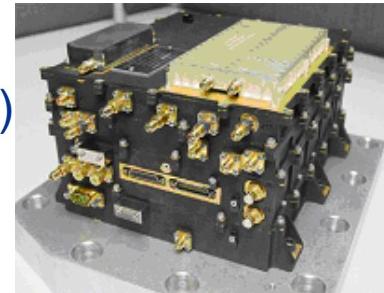
- Advance STRS/SDR Platforms to TRL-7
- Single standard on SDR and WF



- Compliance verified w/
  - tools
  - inspection
  - observation

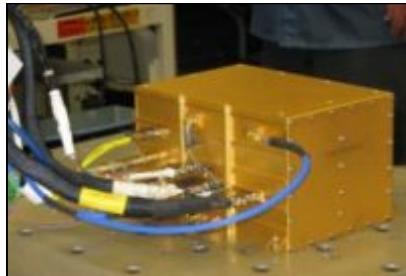
## JPL/L-3 CE

- L-band receive (GPS)
- S-band SDR
- Tx: 2.2-2.3 GHz, 7W
- Rx: 2.025-2.12 GHz, (6 MHz channels)
- Virtex II, Sparc Processor (100 MIPS) , RTEMs OS, EDAC



## General Dynamics

- S-band SDR
- Tx: 2.2-2.3 GHz, 8W
- Rx: 2.025-2.12 GHz (6MHz channels)
- Virtex II, ColdFire Processor (60 MIPS), VxWorks OS, CRAM (Chalcogenide RAM) Memory

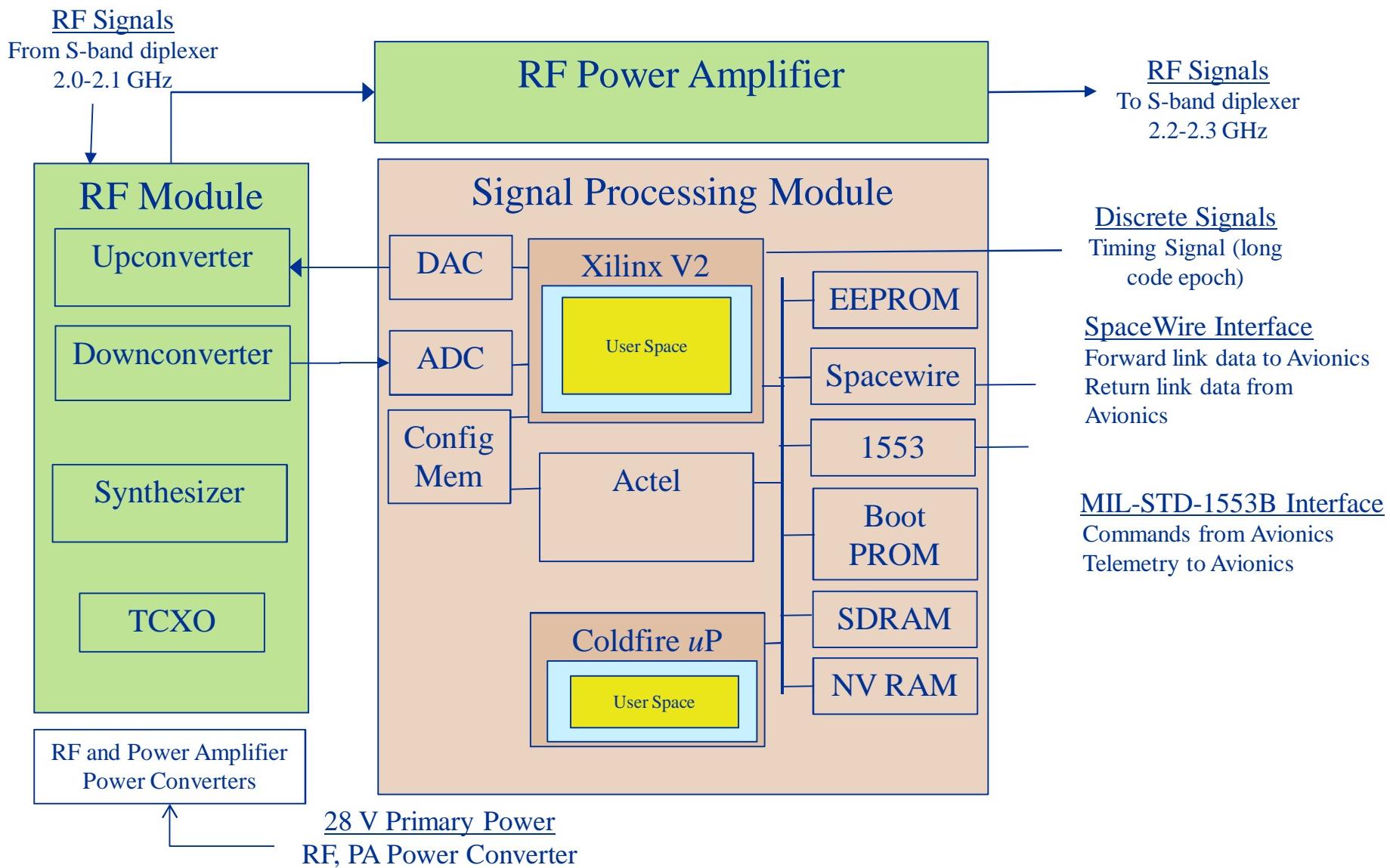


## Harris

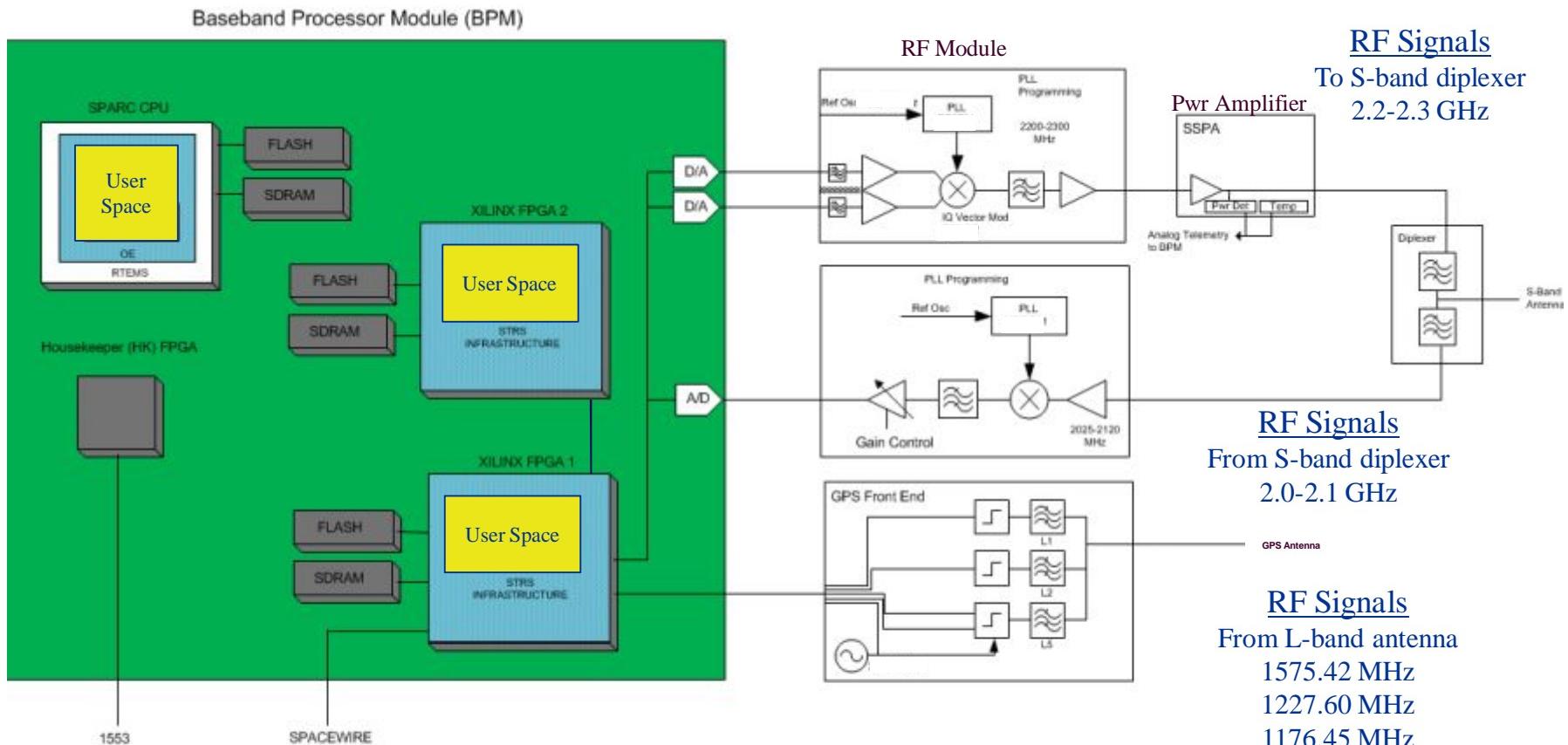
- Ka-band SDR
- Tx: 25.650 GHz, 225 MHz
- Rx: 22.680 Ghz, 50 MHz
- Virtex IV, AiTech-PowerPC Processor (~700 MIPS), DSP (1 GFLOP), VxWorks OS, Scrubbing ASIC
- First Ka-band transceiver
- GSE – Avionics Comm/Telem Simulator



# GD SDR Hardware Architecture



# JPL SDR Hardware Architecture

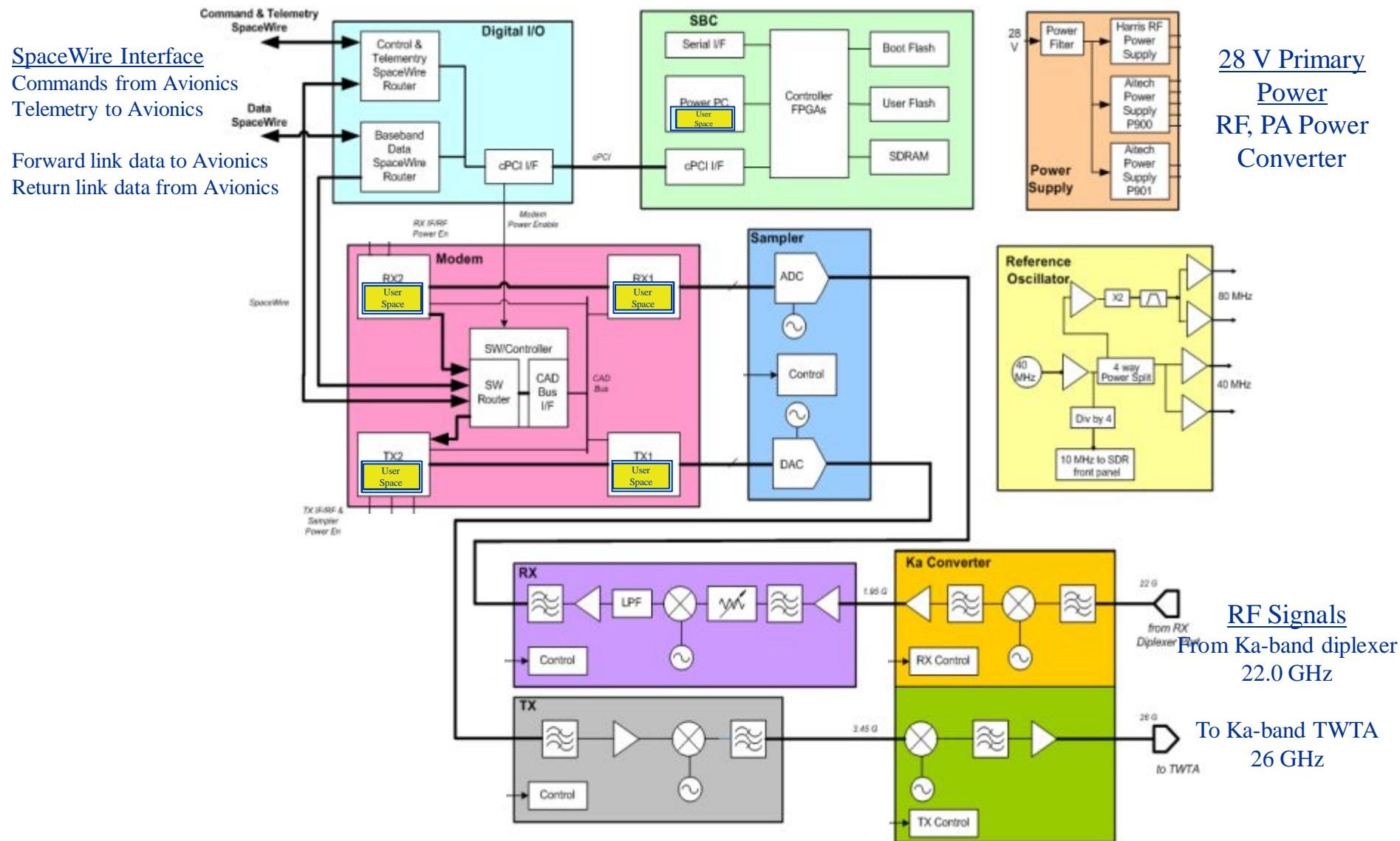


MIL-STD-1553B Interface  
Commands from Avionics  
Telemetry to Avionics

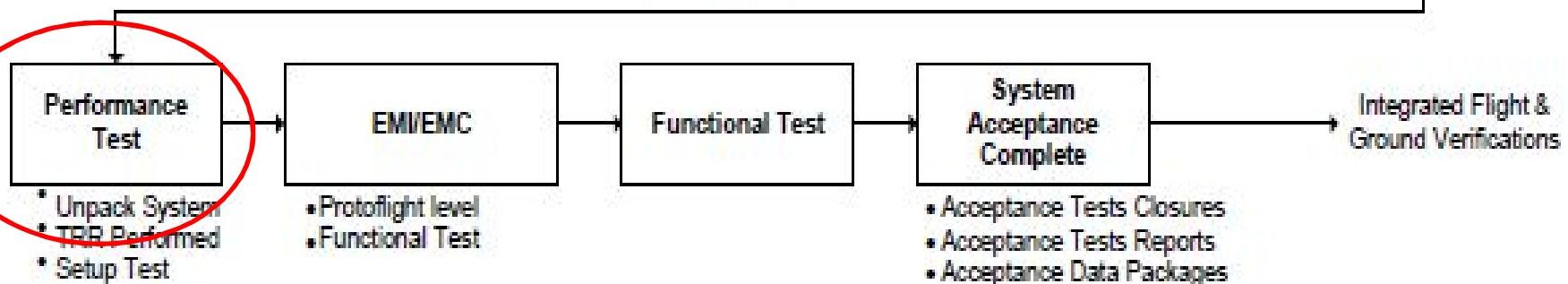
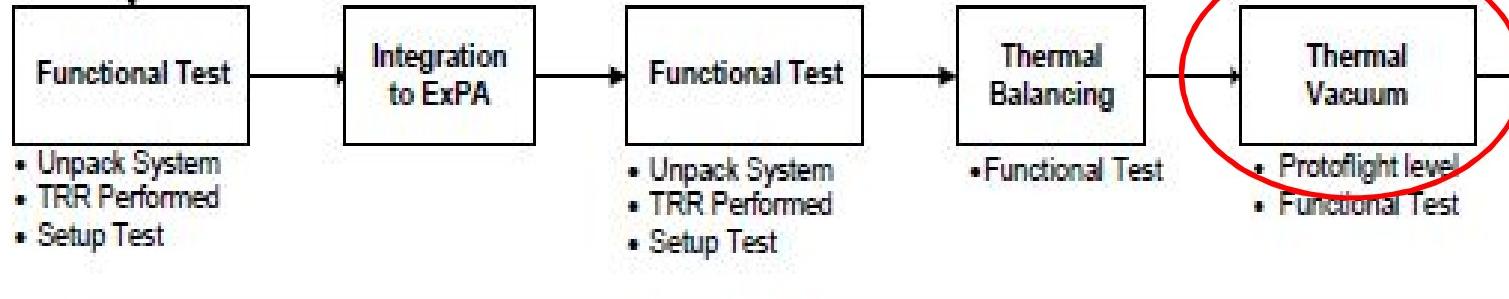
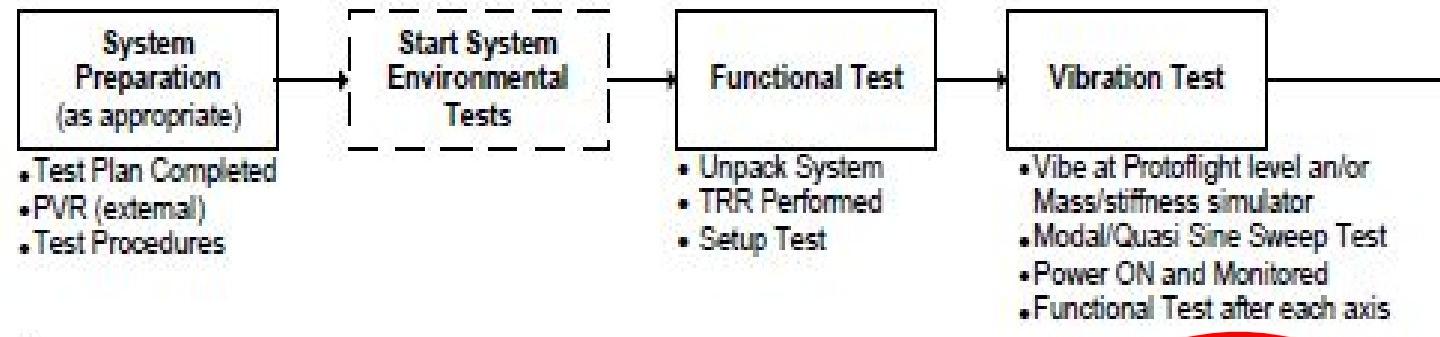
SpaceWire Interface  
Forward link data to Avionics  
Return link data from Avionics

28 V Primary Power  
RF, PA Power Converter

# Harris SDR Hardware Architecture



# Environmental Verification / Validation Approach



**SDR Communications System Tests mixed among Environmental Tests**

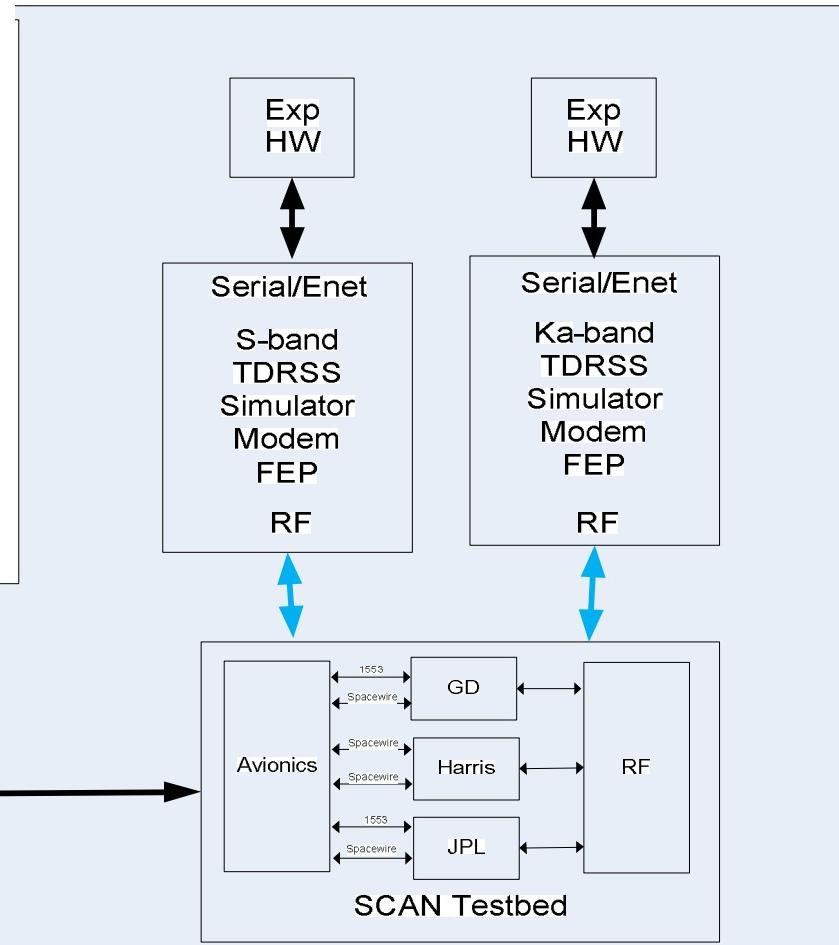


# SDR Verifications: Thermal and Performance

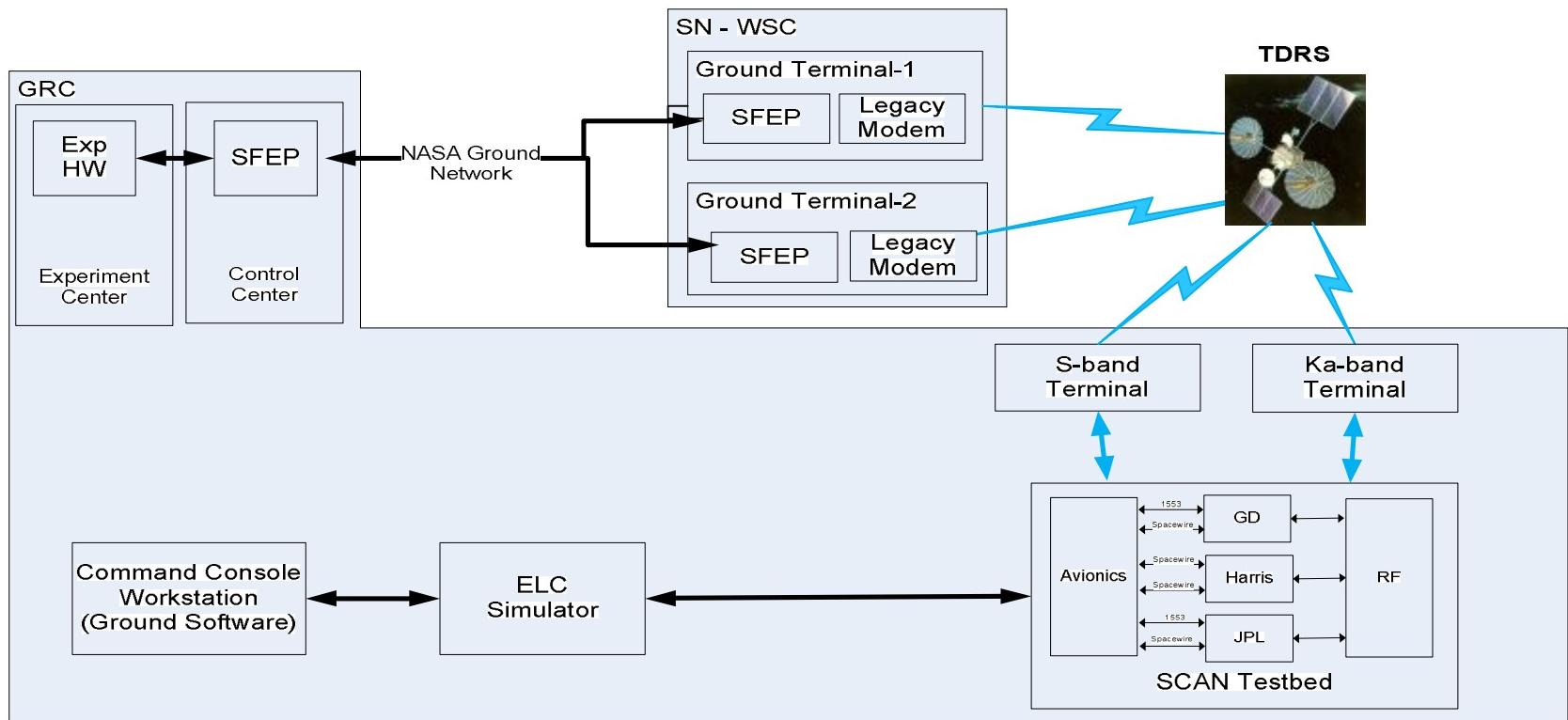
- Plan tests for both application requirements & SDR characterization
- During platform development, require test waveforms for characterizations at system level (and box level)
  - IF interface on the SDR was helpful for JPL SDR system tests
- Thermal
  - Characterize platform aspects, especially when not able to characterize without waveform
    - Vector modulators in JPL SDR
    - Amplifier power (temperature compensating circuits)
    - Analog AGC, digital AGC, NF
    - Ka-band output (TWTA + SDR)
- Performance Test (SDR Applications (Waveforms) – Comm Functions)
  - Minimum Signal Level Tracking/Acquisition Threshold
  - Acquisition Time, False Lock susceptibility
  - Coded and Uncoded BER performance
  - Operating Frequency Control, Frequency Tracking Range
  - Transmitter Output Spectrum/Spectral Mask
  - Carrier Suppression
  - Characterized path from each antenna port to the radio
  - Performance in presence of interring carriers and other PN codes

# SDR & Communication System Test

- Tests signaling, modulation, data formatting
- SDR Reconfiguration
- SDR Spacewire data interfaces
- RF paths & TWTA Tests
- Reduces risk for system level tests
- SDR characterization data
- Waveform configurations > 100 (SDR)
- Ground test software matches operations
- Everything rehearsed on EM system
- RF Subsystem did not include antennas

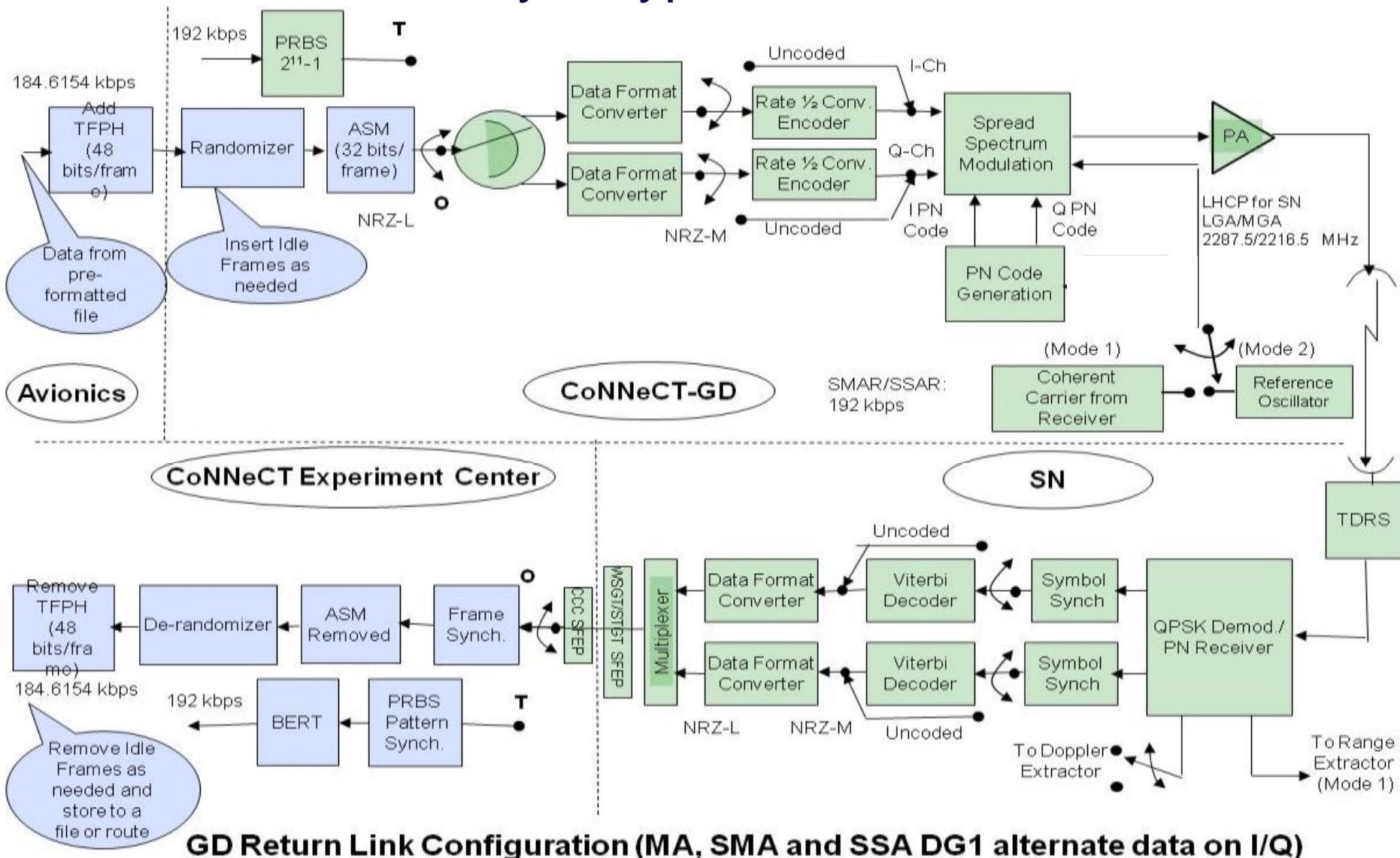


# SN Compatibility Test, TDRSS Relay Link



- Demonstrates system in “test as you fly” configuration
- Uncovers incompatibility and configuration issues throughout the system
  - System configurations: 400-500 (SDR, FS antenna, SN)
- Pre-launch performance data
- RF Subsystem did not include antennas

# Functionality of typical GD Return Link





# SDR Verifications

- Identify early which SDR capability beyond mission requirements to include in requirements set
  - Amplifier characteristics (IF gain, I/Q balance to RF)
  - Temperature characteristics (digital and RF)
  - Trade verifications of essential mission requirements, while characterizing overall performance
- Manage Complexity!
  - Reconfigurable options (coding, framing, data rate, frequency) + mission configurations (payload antenna paths, TDRSS services) == 100's of configurations to manage.
- Changing the culture of verifications for space
  - Unable to test everything on ground before flight
  - Testbed designed to fly new flight configurations with verifications on ground hw only



# SDR Development & Verification Conclusions

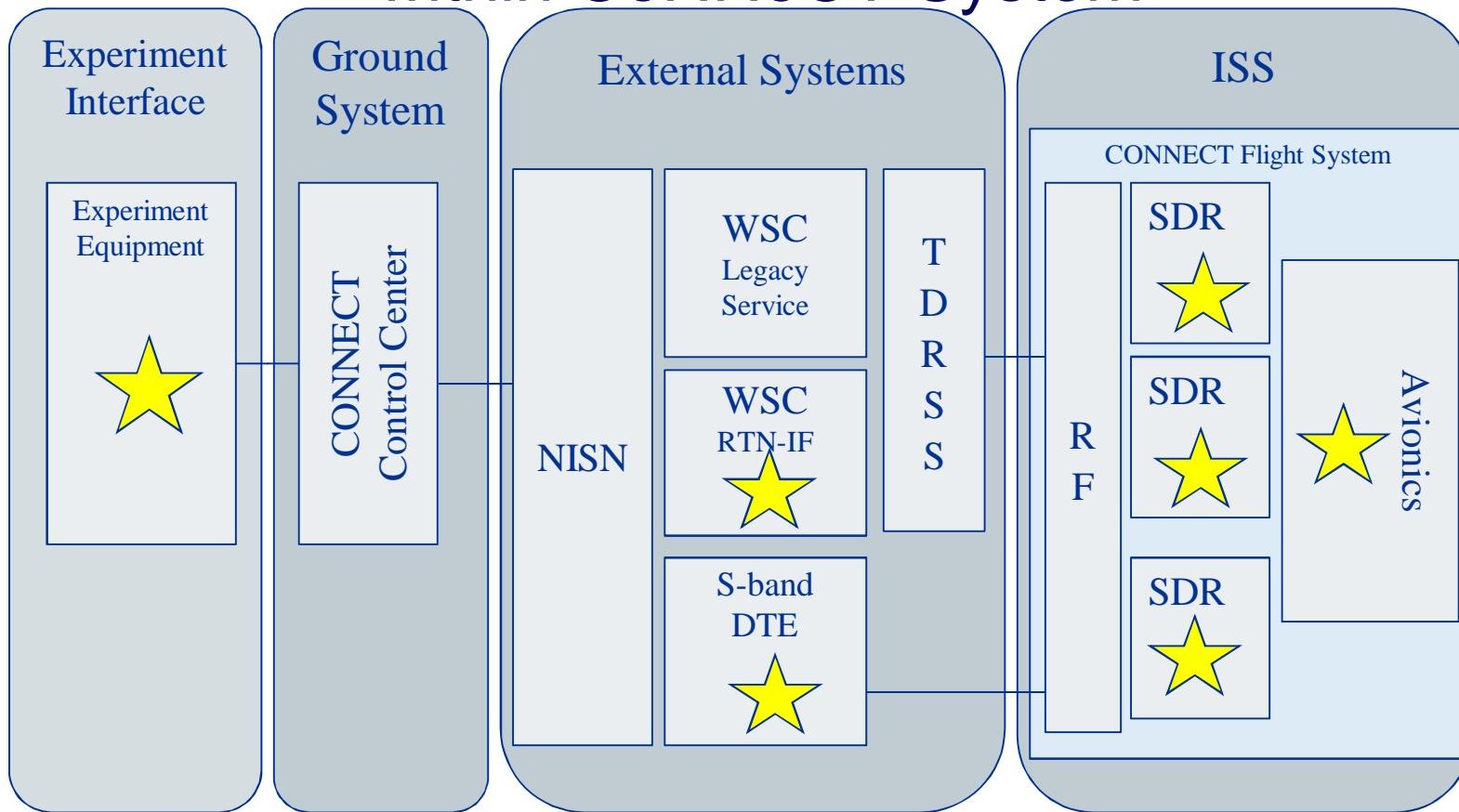
- SDR Development & Verifications
  - Spend systems engineering time on the SDR itself to separate platform and waveform aspects
    - Provide both platform and waveform requirements
    - Balance mission requirements with potential SDR reprogrammability capability
    - Understand platform performance for future waveform developers
    - Good documentation set
  - Divide test plan between platform and applications (Testbed requirements did not address full capability of radio, but rather concentrated on link functions)
- Experiment Opportunity for Academia and Industry
  - Develop/test applications and concepts – expect experiment call in mid 2012
    - Comm waveform development and operation in space
    - SDR-based mission concepts of operations
    - Networking experiments using avionics as router between SDR nodes
    - GPS-based navigation waveforms
  - Prove out STRS among multiple SDRs in space environment
  - Scheduled for launch in mid 2012



# Backup



# Experimenter Access Points within CoNNeCT System



★ = Experiment Element (e.g. sw, fw, hw, component)

Experimenters have access to  
Flt SDRs, avionics, Gnd SDR, various ground points

# SCAN Testbed Flight System Configuration

